

Letters

I wish to respond enthusiastically to Dr. Grace Napier's article in the October 1973 issue of EVH.... On the practical level, Dr. Napier's approach makes very good sense: concentrating on those braille contractions that a child will use most often. What appeals to me even more about this article, though, is that someone like Dr. Napier did the research and wrote such a clear discussion of her findings....

I am fully aware that more and more residential schools are accepting and teaching children for whom braille will be either worthless or less useful than it is for many of us of former days. I am also aware that many children in the public schools are allowed, even encouraged to use means other than braille to cover their classroom work and assignments. Part of the reason for the latter situation is the lack of knowledge of braille by their teachers, or lack of sufficient knowledge to teach it well.

I earnestly hope that many braille teachers, wherever they teach, and

many school administrators and directors of special education will read Dr. Napier's article carefully, and adopt its guidelines or, anyway, its philosophy: that youngsters who can benefit by braille have every right to have it taught to them by teachers who know what they are teaching and how to teach it.

Our national library program may be suffering in the area of braille readership because braille is being "de-emphasized" too much. If this is true, then we should think hard about what we are offering as true alternatives to braille; in my opinion, the alternative is not the recorded form—for everything.

Sincerely yours,

Richard H. Evensen
Special Assistant to the Chief
Division for the Blind and
Physically Handicapped
The Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.

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